

[Thomas Family]

1

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Horase and Allie Thompson (real name)

Lake [Anoka?] Road

Avon Park, Florida

Citrus worker

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LIFE HISTORY

of

THE THOMAS FAMILY

From the dirt road which curved around the lake shore a side view of the squalid Thomas home was visible long before I reached the house.

At one time the small, square, box-like house had evidently been painted but its color was now nondescript. Front and back porches, with rotted sills, sagged away from the house. The steps seemed ready to fall apart, while the porch roofs appeared to be in a state of imminent collapse.

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The two windows of the house were hung with rusty, ragged screens, which were so awry that a large bird could enter with ease, and which afforded little protection against flies and mosquitoes. [A?] pane of glass had been broken from one window, and the opening was stuffed with rags and newspapers.

About the house stood citrus trees, both orange and grapefruit, heavily [laden?] with fruit. Much had fallen and lay decaying upon the ground. The yard was cluttered with an assortment of trash: tin cans, old bones bleaching in the sun, rotting fruit, a pile of brush, trimmings from some leafy vegetables, many bean hulls, and heaps of cinders and charred wood, evidence of many wash days. A rusty broken wire fence staggered along the side yard and supported a small scrawny [bougainvillea?] 2 from which blossomed a few small sprays of [magenta?]-colored flowers.

At the rear of the house, some twenty feet from the corner of the back porch stood a lopsided outdoor earth toilet with a piece of torn [socking?] in lieu of a door. About twenty feet from this and some ten feet from the side of the house, on a gentle downward slope, stood the pump which supplied the family with water. About the pump on the soft wet earth more vegetable scraps and decayed fruit had been scattered, while small pools of greasy water in the sogginess at the pump's base dully reflected the brilliant Florida sunlight.

At my knee, a tiny, dirty girl scrambled up from the hall floor and ran screaming into one of the small front rooms, and a small, also dirty boy peeped through the back door. Then, a woman in soiled clothes, with her head tightly bound in a grimy cloth, came to the door from the room in which the little girl had disappeared. I made known my errand and asked for Mr. Thomas. The woman stated that he had gone to work but that she was Mrs. Thomas and would be glad to talk to me. She then offered a clean but work-worn and roughened hand in greeting and invited me to come in. We entered the front room on the right and Mrs. Thomas excused herself for a moment and went across the hall.

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Soon she returned and sitting down opposite me in a dilapidated rocking chair, she said: "I just had to see how Della was a-gettin on. She's my sister. She in that room over there. Indicating with a nod the room across the narrow hall, "and she sure has been power [?] ailin. Hit takes a right smart of my time a-looking after her too.

"That poor girl, she sure has had a time. About three weeks ago her baby come, and she were right puny long before time fur hit. She got up a week after hit came and seemed to feel right well, then she were took 3 with a fever and a turble cough. Just seemed like no matter what we done fer her, hit didn't do no good atall. No man: Not a site of good. There is a nuss-woman (trained nurse) that lives right acrost the road there and she come over and said hit sure looked like the pneumony to her, and thut we'd better send fer Doc. We didn't know whether he'd come or not [fer?] we aint paid him fer bringin the baby. Well, she kept on a-ailin till we sent fer him, and he come.

"That girl sure were low-down too, (very ill) when he did git here and he said she were just about to have the pneumony, jest like the nuss-woman said. He gave [?] some pills for her to take regular and said fer her not to eat nothin but soup and fruit juice. She don't like them things and I don't see why she can't eat what she likes [aspecially?] when she is so puny. That nuss-woman, she been a-comin over every day and a-bringin soup and milk. Tother day she saw me a-fixin some orange juice fer Della and cruse I left the seeds and pulp in hit she bout [nigh?] on to throwed a fit, she did. [Fust?] she said it oughter be grapefruit juice instid of the orange what with all the fever Della is a-havin, then she run home and got one of them little mites of wire strainers and said I must strain all the juice through that. Why, mam, that jest takes all the goodness outen the juice and you know hit. Poor Della, she's been so puny fur sech a long time.

"Most two hear agone now, she seen her man a-fightin with another and, he got knocked plumb out. Poor Della, she thought he were killed and so she went a plumb rarin crazy and had to be sent to the insane 'sylum fer a spell. Seemed like-as-how she never would git

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outen there neither, and George, her ole man he weren't hurt none to seen of. Jest knock'd out. 3-2

4

"Bout eleven months agone now, they don turn her out and then of course soon as she got home she got in the family-way right away, and with this here youngun what she just had. She were sick and puny the whole time too and just nothin would do her but she must come and stay with me. Well, we took her and George, and Billy their little boy, and we been a-keepin them all this time fer George he just couldn't git nothin to do.

"George, he went down lake Okeechobee way jest before the baby come. And the reason was, Harris he told him we jest couldn't keep him no longer less he paid some board. Fer Harris, he don't hardly ever have no work neither. So George, he got mad, and he left outter [yere?] and went to the Lake country. He promised to send me and Della some money when he got a job, but he aint sent but three dollars yet and we had to use that fer food. He borrowed two dollars from the nuss-woman over there and he aint been able to send that back yet, neither. He wrote he got a job but hit takes [nigh?] on to [all?] he makes to live fer hisself.

"[Della?], she had a powerful hard time with the baby too. Bout three weeks before hit did come she got mighty sick and we thought hit were her time so we sent fer Doc. He come, and he thought hit [nere?] her time too, so he stayed right here all night because hit is too fer to town and we didn't have no way of sendin' him word in a hurry, so he stayed right on. Come mornin there wasn't no baby, and Della didn't have the paine neither. Geo! Doc, he sure were mad. He told us to be sure the next time and not send fer him till we wus sure. I thought hit were a right good joke on him fer he is educated to be a doctor and he thought hit were Della's time too.

Then she said meditatively: "Come to think of hit, thet were a good joke on me too fer I am a mid-wife, and Della had me fooled too. I never 3 6 2

had no trainin for sech; hits just a talent what I got. Guess I caught nigh on to 34 babies for my friends and neighbors, and other folks what has heard of me. I never charge nothin fer hit. But ifen they want me to stay and nuss a spell, then I charge somethin. Folks say I oughter get registered with the State then I could charge somethin, but what good would that there do, most of the folks what sends for me is as poor as I am. Guess you wander why we had Doc for Della with me a mid-wife, but she was so puny all the time I was scared of handlin her case.

"Well sickness, hit sure air a turble, turble thing, and we had our share lately," sighed Mrs. Thomas." My boy Joey, and the onliust boy we got so fer, has been mighty puy fer most a year now. He took a-swellin in his nose and his face hurt him somethin turble. We had Doc to see him, and he said Joey had the diptherey of the nose. He doctored on him for a spell, but Joey, he didn't seem to git no better. Doc said then, he must go to Tampa to a nose specialist and he got the County to help some. The County Officer he weren't satisfied none, seemed like, with what Doc said. So fust he had tother doctor to see Joey. He didn't say just what wus ailin him, but they tuk him to Tampa.

"That doctor in Tampa said he had sinus trouble, and had a grouth growth in his nose. He also claim he must have a bone cut outen his nose, but he never done hit. He just give Joey some medicine to put in his nose and throat and sent him home. Guess he charged so much the County wouldn't pay hit; I heard that Doc charged them nigh on to a hunderd dollars fer what he done fer Joey. Joey's a mite better now, but ifen he gits in a cold wind and his head hurts him somethin turble. He goes to school though most of the time, but he sure looks puny-like.

I aint so well neither. I got a-breakin out on my legs an feet, 3 5 6

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it itches turble. Ifen I work in the wind like when I'm a-washin, and in the wet, then hit sure pesters me. The nuss-woman give me some medicine fer hit and told me what to eat to help hit. But who ever heard of what you eat, makin you sick or well, like she says hit do!" exclaimed Mrs. Thomas.

"I also has the headache lots, but everybody claim hit's brung on by this heavy head of hair and I ain't never had hit out neither, so why should I do hit now? That's about as foolish as what you eat, makin you well or sick. Sometimes I take aspirin and hit helps a lot. The nuss-woman said maybe hits my eyes what nees a-fixin, but I aint got no money fer that and guess I wouldn't wear the glasses ifen I had them[.?.]

"Please, [mam?], scuse me a minit, let me see how Della's a-gettin on. She been so powerful low-down like, I hafta watch her mighty clost." As Mrs. Thomas talked she moved quietly toward the other room.

While she attended her sister I looked at my surroundings. The house was just a shell not even ceiled. Flimsy partitions about six feet high divided the house into four small rooms. Doorways were out in the partition, and grimy muslin curtains were hung [haphszardly?] in place of doors.

The room in which I set had the window stuffed with rags and newspapers. A small shelf against one wall held a comb, brush, soap dish, face powder and rouge, and sided in supporting a cracked old mirror hanging above it upon a large nail. Two beds with dingy covers, a meager pallet upon the floor, several rickety chairs, and a rude unpainted home-made clothes closet, also hung with a grimy curtain, completed the furniture of the room. Some clothing hung from nails on the wall at the head of [4 1 5?]

7

one bed, and several pairs of shoes, old and worn, were tossed at random under the other bed.

As all curtains hung more or less askew, I had a fairly good view of some portions of each room. The room in which I set opened into the kitchen where a rusty wood-burning stove could be seen, together with a rough table and a narrow bench. Upon the table stood a large pan of what looked like very greasy dish water over which swarmed a cloud of flies and fruit gnats. Shelves against the wall behind the stove held an array of dishes, cooked uncovered food, a few cans, and bottles.

Across the hall where Della and the infant lay could be seen the foot of Della's bed and hanging from a nail in the wall beyond was a soiled night-dress. A narrow cot stood partly in the opening of the other small room opposite the kitchen. All floors were extremely greasy and stained. Even the hall which led straight through the house was dark and grimy.

As Mrs. Thomas returned to the room carrying an infant — its thin querulous wail arose and wavered through the house. It was soon stilled as she began rockin vigorously and at the same time shaking the baby up and down in her arms.

“Della seems to be a-restin a mite better now, so I thought ifen I brung the baby in here whilst we talked, she might could sleep some. Lots of folks said hit were a powerful shame for Della to have this here baby after that crazy spell of hern, but [we-uns?] was right proud of hit. And why shouldn't she have more younguns? [She?] seems to be all over that crazy way. Anyway, ifen hit's the Lord's will, younguns will come, don't nobody have none lessen they should, I always say.

8

“I got four now and I'll be right smart proud ifen more come as poor as we is. Younguns is a heap of expense and sometimes they is a heap of worry and grief, like pore little Joey I been a-tellin you about. But they is worth all the trouble and worry and expense. Harris he don't pay them so much mind. Of course he loves them and he does his best fer them I reckon, but he jest don't seem to get the pleasure outer them like I do.

"See them two little fellers playin out under that orange tree, right in the dirt? Well, that's my little girl, the youngest, Ruthie, she's most three years old. Johnnie there, is Della's boy and she had long before that crazy spell come on her. Then we got Joey too, he's the one I been a-talkin about, he's most eight years old. Ellie, who is most fourteen, and Grace who is sixteen. Them's my oldest daughters. I do hope they get home before you leave I want you to see them, they both is so sweet and purty. Well, that's my family of younguns so fer. Seems like I never did have as many younguns as 100 some folks do and they is so far apart in comin along."

Mrs. Thomas peered up the road. "Yes, I sure hopes they gets here soon, I know you will like them. I try to teach them good manners, and to stay dressed nice too, and fix theirselves up. I never let them girls wash no dishes or clothes, or do no scrubbin, fer thet hurst their hands. The nuss-woman, she thinks hits somethin turble that I don't lern Ellie and Grace to work more. But pore little things, I guess they'll lern to work ifen they marries pore boys. Seems like 100 them that lerns hard work always has hit to do, and I don't aim to teach my girls like that. [3 1 1?]

9

don't love him. That makes me kinder sorry too, fer he sure is a good boy and don't have no bad habits still. I'd kinder like fer her to marry him. Harris, he gets awful mad though and he claims Grace is too young to even go with the boys yet, but I don't think so. I want both my girls to marry young. Oh! Grace's beau aint a-workin yet, he's jest eighteen and still goin to school, he's in the same grade with Grace, the eighth. But ifen they married I spect he would get a job right away, guess he'd hafta find 100 somethin to do then, sure."

Just then a tall, dark, rather sullen looking man strode into the house, and Mrs. Thomas introduced him as her husband. "Harris, I thought you went to work for Miz. [Beels?] this mornin! And I told this here lady you was workin, she wanted to ask you about the citrus

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work and I been tellin her the best I could. But what's the matter you aint workin? Miz. [Beels?] said they's two day's work fer you!"

After speaking politely to me, Harris said: "No I didn't go to Miz. [Beele?], why should she be in sech a hurry fer that work, [100?] that place of hern has stood all summer without care. I been out lookin for a house to move to. You aint forgot we haft move come two weeks have you [Ellie?]?"

"But Harris! Miz. [Beels?] said she was a-havin company out to the place this week-end and that's why she was a-huntin you to work fer her those two days," Mrs. Thomas spoke in an apprehensive and somewhat apologetic manner.

"Let her keep a-huntin fer someone to do thet work, what I care," growled Harris. "Hit do beat all how these here folks with money takes advantages of us pore folks 100 and thinks we got to jump ever time they the word. Hit's jest like we had a collar on our necks with a long string [??1]

10

and they could jerk the string and make us jump about.

"Now, you take that woman we rents from here, she said we could have this here place fer five dollars a month, and hit ain't so [?] as you can well see. She said I could work hit out in her grove. Then after I started to work she wouldn't agree to pay me but fifteen cents a hour, said I didn't know citrus work good enough, and wouldn't work fast to suit her. Well, I started in a-hoein the trees, then she came along and wanted me to prune and sprout, 100 and fertilize the whole grove. Course I could about take my time, and ifen I had some other work I could do hit too, cause her work here wouldn't take all my time, but she just wouldn't pay nary a bit more'n fiftee cents a hour.

"Well, I done the work like she said fer awhile, but I been a-layin offen hit lately, and she got mad. She's done said I could pay her cash rent, and that I owed her fer bout three

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months too. She told me to git all or git out. So I told her I'd shore be glad 100 to move, and that there was plenty of places good as hern what we could find.

"Then yestiddy here come this Miz. [Beels?] a-roarin out in her fine car sayin she wanted me to clean up her country place, and hit would be about two days work. Said I must get hit all cleaned by Satiddy afternoon as she had friends comin from way off and wanted to bring them out there to entertain. She were excited and she got me rattled till I plumb forgot we had to move and I had to be house huntin, so I said [100?] I'de go today. Then when I got most to her place I remembered about the movin so I went on to town to look around. She didn't want to pay me but two dollars a day neither, and that ain't enough."

"But we do need the money so powerful bad, [—?] suggested Mrs. Thomas wistfully.

"Well, you want us to be turned right out in the road, Allie?" 3 6 2

11

he boomed belligerently.

Then seeming to realize that I was a stranger and he had been rude, he said apologetically: "You know mam, us poor folks jest ain't got no chance in this world. We is victims of those what has got the money. Now this here woman I been a-workin here in the grove fer, you [kaint?] never please her, so what's the use to try. I'll be glad to git shet of her house and grove, myself."

He fell silent for a moment and Mrs. Thomas looked at him in an apprehensive manner. Then he spoke again and more quietly:

"Well, mam, 100 you want to know about my grove work. Well, I am a experienced citrus man and understand most all of the work. I know how to work and whut I oughter git fer hit. Thet's what makes me made fer they jest don't pay fair wages no more. I hoes the trees mostly and hit's a bad job when they's lost of grass like they mostly is. I oughter git 25¢ a

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hour, but the best they ever pays fer that, is 20 and mostly hit's 15. I have worked fer the big companies too and they is just the same. Hit uster be that they paid us 100 from the time we left their office in the mornin till we come back at night, but they don't do that no more. They take us in trucks to the groves, but they don't pay us till we start work at seven o'clock, or after we knock off at five. They give us one hour at noon, but hit's on our own time, and that ain't right. I live too far away to come home to dinner and hit don't take me no hour to eat my little cold lunch. Ifen they make us take a hour they oughter pay us fer hit.

Sometimes 100 we don't git the notice right at five and we work mebbe fifteen or twenty minutes overtime. When we do this we don't git nary a cent fer hit, that's jest our hard luck. Of course ifen the boss comes along and tells us to keep a-workin, then we gets the reglar wage, but that aint right neither, ifen we work overtime when he tells us we oughter git more fer hit. 3 6 7

12

"They is times when they called me out to work at night with the dustin crew. They dusts at night in the dew, so as to hold the dust clost agin the leaves, thet's the onliest way hit does good. Ifen [we?] we works at night we mostly gits five cents a hour more fer hit but they oughter pay double time. You see [mam?], jest how we is treated, and do you wonder that I just won't work fer them steady? Some of the fellas, they been a-workin fer just one company fer years, but I ain't that-a-way, I know my rights and want them [100?] too.

"One time they tried to form a union here, and that sure would-a made them citrus [rich-men?] come to time in a hurry, but hit didn't never amount to nothin, nobody would stick to hit. Most of the fellas were afraid of losin their jobs, and the grove owners and caretaker companies caused a lot o' trouble about hit. Of course they wus agin hit fer a union of the citrus workers woulda put them on the spot all right.

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"Jest seems like everthing is agin the poor men, even the [Govmint?]. I been on the WPA on there is single men a-workin on hit what gits the same as I do 100 with my famly. That aint right! They should pay accordin to a fambly's size. I try not to mess with the WPA no more, hit aint hardly worth hit. Soon after I got on the WPA I got a job of grove work what paid better, so I tuk hit and than when I got through with hit and wanted to git back on the [Govmint?] work, do you think they put me right on, no [mam?], they didn't, they dacted like they didn't know me at all and asked all kinds of questions. I had to give people's names what knowed me, and all 100 sech as that, then I had to wait a long time too. Hit jest don't pay to fool with hit. Makes me mad too bout not pay accordin to a fambly, somethin like the relief did.

"One woman said hit were like normal employment. But when you git a steady job the boss don't never ask about your fambly, but pay everybody alike fer the same work. Anyway hit aint fair to us what has 3 6 8

13

famblies, we oughter git more fer our work to take care of them."

Turning to his wife, Harris said: "Well, Allie, guess I better git out lookin fer that house ifen we got to move come two weeks." Then to me he spoke politely: "Good day, mam, I am glad to know you, but I got to git a-huntin now and Allie here, she can tell you all you want to know bout as well as I can." With that he stalked out of the house and made his way slowly down the road.

Allie sighed dejectedly and said again: "We sure do need the money that Harris woulda made workin fer Miz. [Beels?] these two days; but he always feels that everybody air agin him. He is a mighty good citrus worker too and a good truck farmer, ifen he could only git along with folks and make out to hold a job fer a spell.

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"We aint never been able to have a farm of our own. I think ifen we could, he might got to workin steady fer he could work his own place to his own mind. We tried oncet to git one of them [Govmint?] loans fer a farm, but we couldn't git hit. I guess they was afraid Harris just wouldn't keep a-workin at hit good enough.

"We have worked on farms fer others but there aint no money in hit that-a-way. All round [?] and Arcadia, and other places we worked, and I have helped too, jest like Harris does. But, I jest won't never let my girls do thet work, not even when they was little, The boss-men they usually want the whole fambly to git out and do the field work. That's the reason I don't never want to go back to the truck farms.

"Ifen Harris jest could keep steady work in the citrus we could git on alright. Even ifen hit don't pay him but fifteen cents a hour. Hit is usually a mite easier than truck farmin too. I can git out and hoe trees just as good as airy man, but I aint sayin a word bout hit mam. Anyway [??]

15

but he never were satisfied at all. There really ain't no money in sharecroppin or workin fer wagon on a farm. Course we useter git most of our feed, especially lots of vegetables. But we don't like them much exceptin cabbage, beans, and turnip greens. Carrots an such may be good fer folks, and that nuss-woman is always tryin to git us to eat them, but they ain't fitten to eat.

"I wisht I had a mess of greens boiled down with hog meat so you could see how good hit is. None of us likes beef meat but we sure does love hog meat, the fresh or the salted. Boil a mess of greens or cabbage down a long time with lots of salt pork, then make some fried flour-dough bread and you get the finest food they is. Oncst that Relief give us a sack of some kind of brown lookin flour, hit tasted jest as queer as hit looked and we didn't like hit but we used hit. The nuss-woman said hit were alright and better fer us then the white

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flours. She is always tryin to git us to eat somethin else, like vegetables and beef meat, and to leave off so much grease and hog meat.

“Della, she is a-startin in that-a-way too now and says so much fried things, and grease hurts her. I don't see why hit should, fer she always has been used to sech. When she got outter the ‘sylum and come back to us she never had no sech notions as that, she were powerful glad to eat what we had, and I can't see no reason to change now.

“But Poor Della she sure has had a bad spell. When they all come down here George and Bill; Bill is my brother who come with them, they couldn't git no work. Folks is curious here, the grove men and the farmers is the worst, and lessen you been a-livin here a long time, they don't give you no work. Soon as Della is well she will be goin to the Lake with George and I spect Bill will go to. Harris he says we just kaint keep [3?]

16

a-carin for the lot of them without no work.

“Look, there comes my girls, I sure am glad they got home in time fer you to see them. Fer a spell didn't neither of them go to school, fer they didn't have no good dresses and they didn't want to go and bnot be dressed up nice like the tother girls. Then the nuss-woman, when she found out about hit she give me some right nice things and I made them over fer the girls. I can sew right nice like when I have the material and the time. But how I ever learnt hit a-movin about all the time, I don't know, guess hit jest come by nature like and mid-wife work.

“Then the County Relief give me some dresses fer the girls that was made in the sewin room. They look real good and is real stylish-like too. I wisht we didn't have to take things from folks and the Relief, but seems like all the mite of the money that Harris makes, jest has to go fer food and then we don't have enough. Ifen it hadn't been fer that nuss-woman a-helpin us with food we would a gone real hongry, lots of times, I guess.

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"A lady give Grace a real nice pair of shoes too. I told Grace tother day hit were a pure shame fer her to hafta wear them to school. Walkn so fer in the sand, they soon won't be fitten to wear to Sunday School. I'd a mind to let her quit school ifen she wanted too, she's sixteen now, but all her friends air goin and she wants to keep at hit."

Mrs. Thomas sighed deeply and looked toward her daughters as they stood by the roadside in conversation with friends: "She wants to go to High School too, Grace does, and ifen her friends all go I guess we will hafta try to send her. I don't see why a girl needs so much education, hit don't do them no good, they usually ups and marries and whut good does a whole passel of larnin do them. Of course everybody needs to learn to read and write, but that's about all they do need, especially the girls.

"I never had much larnin, or Harris neither. We jest went to little [3?]

17

country schools when we had time and wanted to. Mostly we was kept home to work; besides neither of us like school. They didn't have lots of rooms and a different teacher fer every room like they have now. all the schools I ever went to, they was jest one room and one teacher, and most every youngun there larnt outter a different kind of book. Now days, they all larn outter the same books and hafta keep together. How they do hit, I jest don't know. We had to larn readin and writin fust of all too; now hit looks like they teaches so many things to therwise I kaint see how the young was larn anything."

The girls then came in quietly and seemed rather timid. They smiled vaguely and acknowledged the introduction to me with limply extended hands and: "Glad to meet you, mam, " after which they want back to the yard to talk to a passing neighbor.

"They sure is purty girls, and they is jest as good as they is purty. Their hair is jest as curly, they don't neither of them, ever have to put hit up, or have hit curled. I try to learn them to always look nice and I don't never let them do no rough work. They don't even wash

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the dishes fer me, and I am right smart proud of hit too, fer I want them to be real ladies. I hope they marries young too, hit seems the best thing fer younguns is to git married and be settled while they is young like, then they gits along with each other likely. Some friends of mine want their girls to teach school or work in a office or somethin like that fer a spell anyway, but I don't, I want mine to marry.

"Ifen they does git married soon, I hope they don't hafta go to no big city or town to live, this here place is plenty big. I been in the large towns but I aint never lived there and I don't aim to neither. They is too noisy and crowded, and there ain't no place to raise younguns right. Taint [33?]

18

healthy neither bein so crowded up like, but we ain't been very healty neither right out here lately.

"This is way out of town and hit should be healthy out here. Sometimes hit seems most too far out, especially when the girls wants to go to Sunday school, and to parties in town at night. Sometimes a neighbor carries them in her car, tother times they walk. Belongin to the Nazerine Church we ain't supposed to dance, or got to picture shows, or even parties, but I let my girls go some and they do love to dance too. I can't keep them from ever havin any pleasure. We go to Church when we can and we give what we can but hit ain't never much fer we don't have nothin to give. The girls try to go to Sunday school real reglar-like.

"They don't have much fun fer we is so poor, but sometimes I let them have a little party here on the lake shore, and every body what comes brings something to eat. Last week they had a passel of younguns out here and built up a big fire down there on the lake and toasted marshmallows and weinies. Some of them brung cake, and candy, and pick pickles , and they sure had a good time."

Mrs. Thomas looked quite blank at the mention of politics and said that she did not keep up with such and was not interested. "That don't seem like nothin for a woman to mess

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with, I ain't never voted and I don't aim to start now. Sometimes I guess Harris votes, but he don't take much stock in hit neither. He always says the best man fer the places don't never try to git them, and them whats gits in the offices don't never do nothin fer the poor folks no way, he says. So thet's what's the use to vote. I don't know nothin about hit, I don't never pester my mind even a-thinkin hit over. Last time the lection was on, a woman come to see me and tried to say I had a duty to vote, but I told her my duty was right here at home stead of out 3 4 1

19

with all them people a-messin around.

“Well mam, I have enjoyed your visit and ifen there is anything more I can tell you jest let me know, but I believe I told you about all there is of the citrus. Thank you, mam, I hope too, that Della will soon be well, she do seem a heap better today.”